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CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

COMMITTEE ON UN-AMERICAN ACTIVITIES

WASHINGTON

August 31, 1960

Honorable Thomas S. Gates, Jr.  
Secretary of Defense  
The Pentagon  
Washington 25, D. C.

My dear Mr. Secretary:

On August 2, the American people were shocked by the disclosure that two National Security Agency mathematicians, on a mysteriously prolonged vacation, were apparently fleeing the United States for sanctuary behind the Iron or Bamboo Curtain.

On August 6, four days later, Army authorities in Bonn, Germany, confirmed that a Polish-American soldier was missing from his duty station, the 513th Military Intelligence Group, located at Frankfurt. As is now known, this defector has now sought and received asylum in Moscow.

These apparent defections of NSA employees, Berndon F. Mitchell and William H. Martin, and the Army linguist, Vladimir Sloboda, disclose what in my opinion is a glaring weakness in the American security set-up. This opinion is not mine alone, but is shared by members of the Committee on Un-American Activities and most of the members of the House who have discussed these disappearances with me.

These questions are asked:

What was the background of Mitchell, Martin and Sloboda? What type of investigation was made into the background of each, prior to their employment? What security weaknesses did each possess, if any? What officials of Government evaluated the information obtained during the investigation? What concern did the N.S.A. or Army have over the activities of these individuals prior to their disappearance? Was any information received by their respective agencies during their employment which would cause their agencies to question their loyalty? When did the Government learn of their intention not to return to their respective offices? What information does the Government now possess respecting the disappearance of each? Another most important question is whether other Government

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Secretary of Defense

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employees have aided any of these disappearances.

It is apparent to me that Executive regulations intended to guarantee the loyalty of Government employees, especially of sensitive agencies, are not effective and are not safeguarding the security of the United States. It therefore appears that if the United States is to be protected from within, it must be done by legislation with criminal penalties imposed upon those not carrying out the requirements of legislation. To effect this, I propose to amend the general security bill, H.R. 2232, which I introduced.

In order that the Committee may be guided in its consideration of such legislation, I request that you designate representatives of the Department of Defense to appear before the Committee in Executive Session on September 9, 1960, at 10:30 A.M. These representatives should be possessed of all facts necessary to answer the questions set forth in this letter, and other questions dealing with over-all security procedures.

Sincerely yours,

Francis E. Walter  
Chairman